

IN THE CLAIMS:

1 to 2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently amended) The method of producing a ceramic body according to claim 92, further comprising the steps of:

sucking the paraffin balls to the other end face by sucking from the one end face to which the paraffin balls are filled;

inserting the thus sucked paraffin balls into the cells by applying a pressure; and

filling the paraffin balls into the cells to be opened of the other end face.

4. (Currently amended) The method of producing a ceramic body according to claim 92, wherein the ceramic honeycomb formed body, in which the paraffin balls are filled into the cells of the one end face, is used as the suction jig for filling the paraffin balls of the next ceramic honeycomb formed body.

5 to 8. (Canceled)

9. (New) A method of producing a ceramic body having a construction such that cells are plugged alternately at both end faces of a ceramic honeycomb structural body by filling a plugging slurry into predetermined cells at both end faces of a ceramic honeycomb formed body, the method comprising the steps of:

filling a plugging material that forms a mask into only the cells to be opened at one end face of the ceramic honeycomb formed body where the plugging material is filled by the steps of:

preparing a suction jig having a same honeycomb construction as that of the ceramic honeycomb formed body;

adhering a mask, in which holes are arranged corresponding to the cells to be plugged with said plugging material, to one end face of the suction jig;

sucking paraffin balls, a diameter of which is larger than a length of one side of the cell, to said cells to be plugged with said plugging material at the other end face by sucking from the end face to which the mask is adhered;

setting the suction jig, to which paraffin balls are sucked, to the end face of the ceramic honeycomb formed body to which the plugging material is to be filled;

aligning the paraffin balls to the cells to be opened by stopping the sucking operation;

inserting the thus aligned paraffin balls into the cells by applying pressure; and

filling the paraffin balls into the cells to be opened as the plugging material that forms a mask;

immersing the end face, to which the plugging material that forms a mask is filled, into a plugging slurry; and

drying and sintering the ceramic honeycomb formed body while the plugging material that forms a mask is removed during a drying step or a sintering step.